

Darrell Norman, a CAO employee who died this past January, is being honored posthumously as one of the recipients of the "CAO Excellence" award. As a long-time employee of the CAO Technical Support team, Darrell exemplified the customer service standards of the CAO organization, the consultative approach to working with Members and staff to identify practical solutions, and a great attitude that resonated with all whom he worked with and served.

Starting this year, the CAO Excellence award will be formally re-named the "Darrell Norman Excellence Award" as an ongoing tribute to Darrell's many years of exemplary service to the House, in recognition of the tremendous role model he was for his CAO colleagues, and to acknowledge his "can-do" attitude and his infectious spirit.

Liz McBride-Chambers and Edward (Scott) Hood were selected as additional recipients of the "Darrell Norman Excellence Award." In her role as a member of the Office of Employee Assistance and the Human Capital Solutions team, Liz is a critical member of the CAO team. She embodies the mission, vision and values of the organization and provides her exceptional consultative skills and excellent customer service to the entire House community. She brings passion, integrity and an unwavering commitment to the "people" of the CAO organization and the House in everything that she does, whether providing employee assistance services to an individual House employee, consulting with a Member's Chief of Staff to identify a team development solution, or conducting a training program for a specific work group.

Scott Hood, as a supervisor in the Joint Capitol Service Center, inspires and motivates his staff and others to deliver quality services and solutions to many problems for the offices located in the Capitol. Scott has also been a key contributor to our efforts to enhance customer satisfaction and to work across the organization and with a variety of service partners to deliver solutions that exceed the expectations and needs of their customers. He has been particularly effective in bringing his change management and leadership skills to bear in developing an effective partnership with the Architect of the Capitol to deliver seamless solutions to House Leadership Offices.

Wanda Jackson is the 2007 recipient of the "Simplify the Day" award. As a Telephone Systems Consultant, Wanda is committed to going the extra mile for her customers and her colleagues. This past year, she stepped in to fill the void left by the departure of a senior telecommunications administrator in the midst of the Congressional transition, and she took on the support of sixty Member offices throughout the transition, including the coordination of the installation of voice and data services in the District offices of several freshman Members. Wanda worked tirelessly on behalf of one particular District office to troubleshoot their problem with the local telephone company and to manage the set-up process to the point of resolution and the complete satisfaction of the office.

Cari Knowles is being recognized with the "Personalized Solutions" award. In her role of providing graphics-related support services to Members, Committees, and House support offices, Cari has contributed significantly to raising customer expectations for the Graphics of-

fice through the excellence of her work, her ability to build relationships of trust with her customers, and her commitment to personalize a variety of graphics solutions for each customer. By carefully listening to her customers, she brings them a particular value through her ability to take ownership for their project by helping them define their requirements and identify the most appropriate solution to their unique graphics production needs.

Traci Beaubian and Patricia Nuzzo have been selected to share the 2007 "Dedicated" award. Traci Beaubian's persistence in getting the new payroll system stabilized after a challenging conversion process is reflective of her dedication to the House, to her colleagues, and to the House workforce. She looks beyond the surface to identify existing and potential challenges, works with her team to develop practical and innovative solutions, and accepts responsibility for the work of her team in carrying the solution forward. This past year she developed a successful audit technique to identify unusual variances in salary amounts which produced measurable results that were recorded on the CAO's financial statements. Patricia (Trish) Nuzzo, as a senior member of the CAO Advanced Business Solutions team, has responsibility for support of the payroll system covering day-to-day operations, audit management and long-term project support. Her ability to balance short-term and long-term objectives, her positive attitude, and her collaborative approach to resolving problems helps diffuse difficult situations. Trish has been particularly effective as a facilitator in bringing diverse teams together to develop and arrive at workable solutions by matching the right people to the situation, issue or challenge. Her dedication to her work and her ability to recognize and harness the talents of multiple team members has earned her the respect of her colleagues and her customers.

James (Jim) Caskey and Charles (Dave) Woodburn are each being recognized with the "Knowledge" award. In his role as a Senior Procurement Specialist, Jim Caskey's knowledge and skills in negotiation have saved the House tens of thousands of dollars annually through the effective procurement of professional services and software licenses and maintenance agreements. Jim consistently provides the House community, his procurement colleagues, and the program offices he supports with his expert advice, his extensive experience and his service-minded attitude. His knowledge is particularly evident in the mentoring relationships he has with other procurement personnel and in his creativity in finding innovative and effective solutions to procurement and purchasing issues.

Dave Woodburn's knowledge and contribution to the CAO organization and the House far exceeds his immediate responsibilities in the Central Receiving and Warehousing Department, and makes him a "go-to" resource for his co-workers, vendors and contractors alike. In addition to having a firm understanding of the needs of the Members, Committees and staffs that he serves, Dave has brought added value to the organization by applying his knowledge of services and processes to meet challenges enthusiastically, while using his excellent people skills to build solid relationships with House offices and vendors and to resolve issues with staff and internal customers in an amenable fashion.

Christine Stewart is the 2007 recipient of the "One Team" award. Her dedication, profes-

sionalism, outstanding customer service skills, and knowledge of procurement management and the House environment have made Christine a valuable team member to the CAO Procurement team and the offices she supports throughout the procurement and purchasing processes. There is never a task that she is not willing to take on, regardless of the level of effort required or the urgency of the procurement need. This was particularly evident this past year during the Congressional transition when, in response to an urgent procurement requirement, she secured inventory services within 6 days while saving the House over \$70,000.

On behalf of the entire House community, I extend congratulations to the family and colleagues of Darrell Norman, and to Liz McBride-Chambers, Scott Hood, Wanda Jackson, Cari Knowles, Traci Beaubian, Trish Nuzzo, Jim Caskey, Dave Woodburn, and Christine Stewart for their tireless efforts and outstanding contributions to the U.S. House of Representatives. I extend my condolences to Darrell's family, and I wish his CAO colleagues and this year's CAO ACE Award recipients continued success in their endeavors and contributions to the House community.

#### INTRODUCING THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY CENTERS ESTABLISHMENT ACT

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the National Emergency Centers Establishment Act, a bill I first introduced in the 109th Congress.

Many of us share the belief that the Federal Government's response to Hurricane Katrina was disorganized and inadequate; the Federal Emergency Management Agency—FEMA—was far too slow to arrive and evacuees were left stranded in massive shelters with egregious standard of living violations.

Sixteen months following the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Katrina, more than 13,000 residents who were displaced by the storm were still living in trailers provided by FEMA. Eighteen months after Katrina, half the homes in New Orleans still did not have electricity. FEMA had informed Congress that 60,000 families in Louisiana still live in 240-square-foot trailers—usually at least 3 to a trailer.

Even President Bush realizes the shortcomings of our Federal Government to respond to the immediate and long-term needs of these disaster victims.

As recently as March 1, 2007, President Bush acknowledged that many gulf coast residents remained frustrated with the slowness of rebuilding after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and pledged to continue to help hurricane victims and their communities rebuild.

The sluggish and derisory reaction of our Federal Government to disaster victims affects me personally. In 2004, four hurricanes ravaged my home State of Florida, all of which literally destroyed parts of the counties in my district. In the immediate and long-term aftermath, our communities saw FEMA's shortcomings. Eighteen months after Hurricane

Wilma struck in 2005, citizens are still residing in trailers labeled on the outside "FEMA."

The lack of natural disaster preparedness efforts and temporary housing options for disaster stricken citizens has only exacerbated an unbearable situation. Deficient recovery responses have led to elongated recovery rates in my district and across this Nation.

Two main problems—increasing the availability of temporary housing in times of national emergencies and improving training and preparedness for national emergencies—must be resolved to ensure that the humanitarian catastrophe that occurred in the gulf coast and continues to happen today will never occur again.

We have an obligation to better prepare and more adequately respond to the needs of communities hit by natural disasters. We have a responsibility to ensure that the most basic needs of disaster victims are met immediately following the devastation.

It is for this reason that I come to the floor today to introduce the National Emergency Centers Establishment Act. My bill establishes no fewer than six National Emergency Centers spread throughout the United States. The centers would be used, first and foremost, to provide temporary housing, medical and humanitarian assistance, including education, for individuals and families displaced due to an emergency. The centers would also serve as a centralized location for the training and coordination of first responders in the instance of an emergency. In addition, the centers will improve the coordination of preparedness, response and recovery efforts between governments, private, not-for-profit entities and faith-based organizations.

The National Emergency Centers would be located on military bases, with a preference wherever possible for those installations closed during the most recent Base Realignment and Closures—BRAC—round. I am proposing these sites because the necessary infrastructure to house, feed, educate and care for evacuees over an extended period of time is already in place, thus limiting the cost and time needed to construct these facilities.

Madam Speaker, our Nation was not prepared for the disastrous hurricanes that struck Florida and the gulf coast in 2004 or in 2005. The establishment of National Emergency Centers will go a long way to ensuring that our response to national emergencies are not as disastrous as the disasters that created the emergencies in the first place.

I ask for my colleagues' support and urge the House leadership to bring this legislation to the floor for its swift consideration.

IN MEMORY OF GENE MCKAY

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, South Carolina early today lost a giant in broadcasting with the death of Eugene Klemick, who we all knew as the legendary Gene McKay.

Gene began his service in Columbia at WIS Radio. He and fellow radio pioneers, Dave

Wright, Bill Benton and Dennis Waldrop, purchased WSCQ-FM in 1976, where Gene, along with co-hosts Dave Wright and Bill Benton, began to cheerfully wake up the Midlands with "Good Morning Columbia." Following the sale of WSCQ-FM in 1997, Gene continued his early morning "Good Morning Columbia" radio show at WISW-AM with co-hosts Bill Benton and Doug Enlow.

Gene had a keen insight which produced an instant humorous wit with profound political beliefs and a great love of America. He was a devoted family man and patriot who helped Midlands residents begin each day with cheer. He was a proud Polish-American from Chicago who became beloved in South Carolina.

As an admirer and friend, our family extends our sympathy to Roni, Katherine, his extraordinary co-workers, and countless friends.

CONGRATULATING FLORIDA GULF  
COAST UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S  
BASKETBALL TEAM

**HON. CONNIE MACK**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. MACK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to Florida Gulf Coast University Women's Basketball team on their remarkable season. As the national runner-up in Division II women's basketball, the team has become an inspiration to Southwest Florida, and everyone in our community is incredibly proud of their accomplishments.

The Eagles success is made even more amazing because Florida Gulf Coast University is Florida's newest University, having opened its doors just 10 short years ago.

This year, the Eagles set a remarkable school record with 34 wins and only one loss, making them an elite group of NCAA student athletes. Head Coach Karl Smesko and his team deserve our congratulations. They not only won on the court, but with their passion and dedication they have also won Southwest Florida's admiration and respect.

Florida Gulf Coast University is an integral part of our community, and their success in academics and athletics is second to none.

Congratulations to all the coaches and players that worked so hard and achieved so much: Karl Smesko, head coach; LeAnn Free-land, assistant coach; Ebonie Halliburton, assistant coach; Bryan Crislip, assistant coach; Kim Balduzzi, Candace Carreras, Jen Conely, Delia De LaTorre, Chelsea Dermyer, Ashley Haegle, Adrienne McNally, Alex Nelson, Amanda Pierce, Kate Schrader, Steffi Sorensen, Princess Stewart and Angel Woods.

INTRODUCTON OF LEGISLATION  
TO MAKE PERMANENT THE DE-  
DUCTION FOR MORTGAGE INSUR-  
ANCE PREMIUMS

**HON. SANDER M. LEVIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce legislation to make per-

manent the deduction for mortgage insurance premiums. I want to thank my colleague Mr. RYAN, who sponsored this bill in the last Congress, for working with me in this matter. I would also like to thank Representatives JOHN LEWIS, WALLY HERGER, JOHN TANNER, DAVE CAMP, RAHM EMANUEL, PHIL ENGLISH, SHELLEY BERKLEY, JERRY WELLER, JOE CROWLEY, RON LEWIS, ALLYSON SCHWARTZ and ERIC CANTOR who are joining Mr. RYAN and myself in introducing this legislation.

Last year, a version of Mr. RYAN's legislation, H.R. 3098, was incorporated into the Tax Relief and Health Care Act. As a result, homeowners who purchase mortgage insurance will be able to deduct the premiums they pay beginning January 1st of this year. Unfortunately, the provision is temporary and expires December 31, 2007. The legislation we are introducing today will make this deduction permanent.

Government and private mortgage insurance programs help first-time, low- and middle-income, minority and veteran borrowers afford to purchase a home. The Federal Housing Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, Rural Housing Service and private mortgage insurance programs allow these homebuyers to obtain a mortgage with a significantly reduced down payment of 3 percent or less of the appraised value, addressing one of the key barriers to homeownership.

As a result of our legislation, mortgage insurance will be a more affordable option for families that want to purchase a home. Particularly given the ongoing problems associated with subprime lending, it is important that we continue to make premiums on new mortgage insurance contracts deductible beyond the end of this year.

According to the most recent data, more than 388,000 families in my home state of Michigan held mortgages with either FHA or private mortgage insurance, and insured mortgages comprised 36 percent of home purchase loans originated in Michigan from 2000–2005. Mortgage insurance covered 40 percent of the mortgage loans made to African American or Hispanic borrowers. Borrowers earning less than 120 percent of area median income comprised 80 percent of the insured home purchase loans originated in the state.

Nationwide, 11.5 million families presently use mortgage insurance. The people who use mortgage insurance are our neighbors. They are policemen, firemen, teachers, and veterans who live in every community in every one of our districts. This House has a long-standing commitment to expanding homeownership and to achieve that goal, we must expand the circle of people that are able to participate in the housing market.

Making the tax deduction for mortgage insurance premium payments permanent will help make the American dream of owning a home come true for many more of our citizens. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation and join us in working towards its enactment at the earliest opportunity this year.